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“Small Steps. Big Rewards.” Prevention Campaign Help Millions At Risk as Diabetes Skyrockets

With diabetes rising at epidemic rates, the latest scientific studies on diabetes prevention offer great hope for over 16 million Americans at increased risk for the disease. U.S. Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) Secretary Tommy G. Thompson is leading a national campaign to encourage Americans to find out if they are at risk for diabetes and to take small steps to delay or prevent the disease and its many complications. *(Insert your organization's name)* and other business, health, fitness and nonprofit leaders are joining the “Small Steps. Big Rewards.” campaign, the first national diabetes prevention awareness effort, and will help disseminate the campaign's messages and lifestyle change tools to the millions of Americans at risk.

“We are asking Americans to find out if they are at risk for diabetes and we are showing them how to take action to prevent it,” said Secretary Thompson. “With the support of business and industry leaders, this critical prevention message will be delivered where Americans live, work, and play and through their health care providers.”

The “Small Steps. Big Rewards.” campaign emphasizes that relatively modest lifestyle changes can help people prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, the most common form of the disease.

(Insert quote from your organization or group's president or spokesperson. The quote could refer to your participation in “Small Steps. Big Rewards” campaign.)

The National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP), sponsored jointly by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is directing the campaign. The centerpiece of the campaign is the lifestyle change “GAME PLAN for Preventing Type 2 Diabetes” that is based on the Diabetes Prevention Program clinical trial, sponsored by NIH. This landmark study showed that millions of overweight Americans at high risk for type 2 diabetes can delay or prevent the disease by losing 5 to 7 percent of their body weight with moderate changes in diet and increased physical activity.

“Diabetes has risen over 40 percent in just five years,” said Dr. James R. Gavin III, Chair of the NDEP. “We know it can be prevented and diabetes prevention is something ordinary Americans can do, with small steps. And we know there's a big reward – a longer, healthier life. Now we need to make sure everyone knows this good news and is prepared to take action.”

At least 16 million Americans have pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal, but not yet high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes. People with pre-diabetes are more likely to develop diabetes within 10 years and also are at a higher risk of having a heart attack or a stroke.

The NDEP strongly recommends adults 45 years of age and older, who are overweight, be tested for pre-diabetes and diabetes. Everyone age 45 and older, even if they are not overweight, should consult with their health care provider about being tested. Those who are younger than 45, overweight, and who have one or more of the other risk factors could be at a high risk of developing type 2 diabetes and should also consult their health care providers about testing.

NDEP has developed materials for health care providers and people at risk to help them get moving and eat healthier. The **GAME PLAN** toolkit for health care providers includes evidence-based suggestions for identifying patients at risk, reviews appropriate tests and diagnostic procedures, and lays out a program providers can follow to help patients change their behaviors. Patient materials, designed to help people take the small steps needed to prevent diabetes, include a fat and calorie counter, a food and activity “tracker” for monitoring and recording behavior, and tips for starting and maintaining a walking program.

(Replace paragraph above with details on your organization or group’s upcoming diabetes-related activities. Be sure to include contact information. THIS STEP IS OPTIONAL!)

For more information on the “Small Steps. Big Rewards.” campaign or to obtain materials to get started on the GAME PLAN, visit www.ndep.nih.gov or call 1-800-438-5383.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), which together with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sponsors the National Diabetes Education Program, has identified the following as risk factors for pre-diabetes and diabetes:

- **Age:** risk increases with age
- **Overweight:** BMI (body mass index) 25 or higher (23 or higher if Asian American, 26 or higher if Pacific Islander)
- **Blood pressure:** 140/90 mm/Hg or higher
- **Cholesterol:** Abnormal lipid levels – HDL cholesterol less than 40mg/dL for men and less than 50 mg/dL for women; triglyceride level 250 mg/dL or higher
- **Family history of diabetes:** having a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- **Race/Ethnicity:** African American, American Indian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, or Hispanic American/Latino heritage
- **History of Gestational diabetes:** or giving birth to a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- **Inactive lifestyle:** exercises fewer than three times a week